

Search begins for east-side highway study consultant

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BLOOMINGTON - Another step is being taken to study the potential location of a proposed highway on the east side of Bloomington and Normal.

The search for a consultant to perform the study has started, McLean County Highway Engineer Jack Mitchell said Friday.

Consultant proposals are due April 27, and the selection process is expected to run through May. Mitchell estimated the study should begin in June or July.

McLean County, the city of Bloomington and the town of Normal agreed to participate in the study and each added \$100,000 toward the \$300,000 in local money required to secure an \$800,000 federal grant to help pay for the study.

The study will look beyond the 2,500-foot corridor designated on the comprehensive plans of Bloomington and Normal as a potential location for the proposed highway. The study's parameters define a three-mile-wide area bounded by Towanda Barnes Road - also designated as 1900 East Road - 2200 East Road, Interstate 55 and Interstate 74.

The federal money is designated for McLean County, so it is the lead agency on the study.

However, a steering committee to assist in the management of the work has been established, Mitchell said. The steering committee includes representatives from the county, town and city as well as state and federal highway officials.

Mitchell said the three local governments prepared a request for proposals for companies interested in conducting the study. So far 20 of the proposals have been sent to consultants qualified to conduct the study.

Other interested businesses who meet the Illinois Department of Transportation's pre-qualified criteria should contact Mitchell at the county highway department.